

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 2, under the heading “CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS” with the following rewritten paragraph:

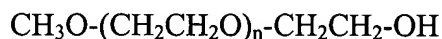
This application is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/068,371, filed on February 6, 2002, now U.S. Patent No. 6,710,125, which is a divisional of U.S. Application Serial No. 09/740,556, filed on December 18, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,376,604, and claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/171,834, filed December 22, 1999, all of which ~~[[is]]~~ are incorporated by reference herein in ~~its entirety~~ their entireties.

Please replace the paragraph on page 1, lines 11-14, with the following:

Covalent attachment of the hydrophilic polymer, poly(ethylene)glycol, abbreviated PEG, also known as poly(ethylene oxide), abbreviated PEO, to molecules and surfaces is of considerable utility in biotechnology and medicine. In its most common form, PEG is a linear polymer terminated at each end with hydroxyl groups:

Please replace the paragraph on page 2, lines 1-8, with the following:

PEG is commonly used as methoxy-PEG-OH, or mPEG in brief, in which one terminus is the relatively inert methoxy group, while the other terminus is a hydroxyl group that is subject to ready chemical modification. The structure of mPEG is given below~~[[.]]~~ :



Random or block copolymers of ethylene oxide and propylene oxide, shown below, are closely related to PEG in their chemistry, and they can be substituted for PEG in many of its applications~~[[.]]~~ :

Please replace the paragraph on page 4, lines 2-16, with the following:

The terms “functional group”, “active moiety”, “activating group”, “reactive site”, “chemically reactive group” and “chemically reactive moiety” are used in the art and herein to refer to distinct, definable portions or units of a molecule. The terms are somewhat synonymous in the chemical arts and are used herein to indicate that the portions of molecules that perform some function or activity and are reactive with other molecules. The term “active,” when ~~uses~~ used in conjunction with functional groups, is intended to include those functional groups that react readily with electrophilic or nucleophilic groups on other molecules, in contrast to those groups that require strong catalysts or highly impractical reaction conditions in order to react. For example, as would be understood in the art, the term “active ester” would include those esters that react readily with nucleophilic groups such as amines. Typically, an active ester will react with an amine in aqueous medium in a matter of minutes, whereas certain esters, such as methyl or ethyl esters, require a strong catalyst in order to react with a nucleophilic group.